11: Hourani S-4 (no date) 1946 MD1 Syria MD1

threatened by the avarice of his superiors, the encroachment of his equals and the insubordination of his vassals. The size of domains and the fortunes of noble families were always changing. A certain stability was, however, given to the system by the practice of turning lands into religious trusts (Waqfs) for religious or charitable objects. Families which were the custodians of such trusts, which benefited from them in other ways, or which by tradition filled important religious positions, had a better chance of retaining their wealth and influence than those which had become rich and powerful through tax-farming.

At the bottom of the feudal structure were the cultivators, who were serfs of their immediate lords, owing them a variety of feudal dues and oppressed by them. The usual practice was for a village to hold and cultivate its land in common; small individual holdings were the exception.

9

Sometimes the local dynasts were adventurers, ruling by the sword alone and without any support from local tradition. But often their rule was firmly based upon local sentiment and loyalty: a localism which was reinforced by tribalism and, in those districts in which compact religious minorities were settled, by sectarianism. This was especially so in Lebanon; but over the whole country it is true to say that the local community was the real political and social unit. There was no effective consciousness of an Arab nation, and 'Syria' was no more than a geographical expression; nor was there any sense of responsibility for the Government, which was generally regarded as essentially hostile, an instrument of oppression.

Side by side with the life of the countryside, there went on the distinctive life of the Syrian towns. The immemorial stopping-places on the trade-routes—the ports, the bazaar-towns and the caravan-towns—kept something of their greatness in the Ottoman period. There was still a lively transit-trade; Syrian wheat and fruit still went to Egypt, cottons and silks to Europe. The town-populations were Arabic in language, and their ways were deeply influenced by Arab customs; but their social structure differed from that of the countryside, and was determined by their peculiar economic function. They were naturally more open to influences

from outside than were the villages. The foreign merchants and artisans in the coastal towns and Aleppo, the pilgrims who every year met in Damascus for their long journey down the pilgrims' road to the Holy Cities in Arabia, left their mark. Thus beside the society of the desert and the countryside there flourished an urban society of merchants and craftsmen. Not only was the life of the great towns very different from that of the countryside; they differed one from another. Each had a life of its own and was the focus of an intense local loyalty.

10

The Arabo-Islamic community of Syria was a part, although in some ways a distinctive part, of two larger units: the Arabic-speaking world which extended from the Atlantic Ocean to the frontiers of Persia, and included Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Tripoli, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula; and the Islamic world, stretching as far as the marches of China and embracing, in addition to the Arabic countries, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Turkestan and large parts of Africa, India, China and the East Indies. In spite of local differences, of internal conflicts and of the difficulties of communication, each of these worlds was unified on a profound level.

Over a large part of the Arab and Islamic worlds, the spiritual and social unity which they possessed was reinforced by the political unity derived from common membership of the Ottoman Empire. The positive virtue of Ottoman rule was that it provided this political unity; its negative that it did not interfere with the life and customary law of the subject-peoples. Nomads by origin, the Ottoman Turks cared little for the arts of peace, for commerce and industry, or for culture. They left them to others, and thus contributed nothing essential to the civilization of the Arab provinces which they ruled for four hundred years. In conquering the Arab world they had themselves been conquered by it. They had become Moslems, and in their intellectual and social life had adapted themselves to Arab ways.

The Turks performed also another function. Their military strength preserved the Arab civilization from interference or even from living contact with other civilizations. In the early Islamic centuries such contacts had existed, and the Arabo-

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

v INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS

The Need for Further Industrialization

It is generally agreed—and the mission shares this opinion—that with a more rational distribution and better cultivation of the available land, and particularly with a gradual extension of the irrigated area, Syrian agriculture could for a considerable time to come easily absorb the expected natural population increase. With respect to the need for further industrialization, however, the relevant considerations seem rather to be the territorial and occupational distribution of the population and the evolution of this pattern. The principal question is whether—and if so, to what degree and in which direction—Syrian industry needs further expansion to absorb the present and immediately foreseeable effective labor supply.

Although reliable figures are not available there is no clear evidence that Syria is suffering from chronic unemployment. There are, however, some very overpopulated rural areas with considerable underemployment and there is a continuous flow of labor from the villages to the urban centers. During the postwar period of considerable building activity and rapid industrialization, these markets were able to absorb the increased labor supply. But at times, as for instance in 1948 in Aleppo, the urban workers have become alarmed by the influx of villagers competing with them and aggravating already existing unemployment, particularly in the textile industry. There were demonstrations and a request to the local authorities to bar villagers from applying for town employment; this in turn induced the government to encourage certain village industries—the decline of which is again contributing to urban labor pressure.

This illustrates the tensions which are bound to arise as a consequence of the existing imbalance between rural-urban social and economic conditions. Unless the village standard of living is greatly improved, there is little doubt that the trend toward the towns will continue strong and that the numbers seeking employment in industry will greatly exceed the natural increase in the industrial population. This tendency may even become more pronounced when, as is to be anticipated, illiteracy in the villages declines, transport and communications improve and the rural population becomes more aware of its poverty and social insecurity.

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

The recommendations of the mission with regard to agriculture and animal husbandry, including those concerning land tenure and irrigation, would, if accepted, open significant new perspectives to the farmer and farm laborers and tend to check the drift from rural areas. If it were possible to spend more on irrigation than has been recommended, the trend could perhaps be reversed. It is not likely, however, that the growing labor supply can be absorbed and unemployment avoided without further industrialization. Even on the highly optimistic assumption that migration towards the towns can be halted, Syria must contend with such factors as the natural increase in the industrial labor population and the gradual shift from handicraft to mechanization with the consequent release of manpower.

Although estimates in this field are particularly hazardous, the mission suggests that under the most favorable circumstances Syria will have to create at least 20,000-25,000 new industrial jobs during the next six years to keep its industrial labor market in reasonable balance.

Limiting Factors

It is often contended in Syrian official and business circles that shortage of local capital rather than lack of confidence is the principal factor limiting further industrialization. Assuming that this is so, it would follow that to advance development Syria should make a strenuous effort to create attractive conditions for foreign capital as a supplementary source of industrial financing. This conclusion does not seem to be generally acknowledged. At least the nationalization of foreign-owned public utilities without settling the matter of indemnification of their proprietors, and the regulations with respect to foreign companies working in Syria, do not indicate its acceptance.

There is, however, room for some doubt whether scarcity of capital should be considered as a major factor limiting development of Syrian industry. During the past eight years, investments in industry have supplied the country with an industrial capacity capable of meeting most of the need for manufactured articles, based on local primary production, which the population can afford; indeed, as already pointed out, in several branches of industry there is excess capacity. Generally speaking, Syrian industry appears to have attracted substantial amounts of capital. Even taking into account the fact that the sources of industrial investment

14:International Bank S-5(1954)1955 MD1 Syria MD1

In the manufacture of plastic materials and domestic utensils factory production has made a beginning. This also seems to be a promising field for further development. 433

The possibility of the establishment of a plant for mixing fertilizers and making insecticides from imported ingredients should also be explored.

In the Main Report the mission has pointed out that the erection of an oil refinery in the Homs area seems to be entirely justified.

Prospects for Village Industries

With development of agricultural and rural community organization, better water and electricity supply in small towns and villages, wider general and vocational education and easier and cheaper transportation, the conditions under which village industries have prospered will undergo a change, not necessarily for the better. Traditional consumption patterns will be modified, techniques will change, factory-made manufactures will enter the village markets and compete with handicraft products and transportation costs will provide less protection. On the other hand, the density of the population and its purchasing power will increase and in certain regions tourist trade may develop. Village industries may find a better market for agricultural and animal products processed into foodstuffs, for the manufacturing and repairing of simple tools and implements used domestically or in the field, for the production of furniture and other articles for house and farm, ornaments, clothing accessories, costume jewelry and other goods of indigenous design. 433 369

We do not recommend that efforts be made to check historical trends by assisting village industries which will inevitably decline and ultimately disappear. Yet it seems very probable that a rather significant part of Syrian industrial enterprise carried on in rural communities will for a long time to come survive and be a determining factor in the economic, social and cultural conditions of many small towns and villages. That part certainly deserves more attention than it has generally received. An improvement of standards of quality and efficiency, commercial and financial techniques and social and sanitary conditions of these establishments would undoubtedly contribute to raising living standards in the rural areas.

It is therefore suggested that the community leaders, recommended elsewhere in this report, with the assistance of specialists representing the

14:International Bank S-5 (1954) 1955 MD1 Syria MD1

Ministry of National Economy, carefully investigate the conditions and opportunities which exist in this field. Industrial extension, assistance in the organization of credit cooperatives, particularly with a view to giving protection from usurious middlemen practices, in the marketing of products which might find wider outlets, and eventually in founding tourist attractions could be considered. Even if only limited results can be achieved by such measures they should be encouraged as a means of creating better rural conditions and at the same time reducing the pressure of labor migration toward the crowded towns.

3Royal Institute of International Affairs U-4 (no date)1954 M1 Middle East
Lebanon MEI
Syria MDI

L
S
241
433

MAIN CROPS

	Area (000 hectares)		Production (000 metric tons)		Yields (100 kg. per ha.)
	1951	1952	1951	1952	1950
Wheat	61	70	43	50	7·3
Barley	15	20	14	27	11·8
Cotton	5	2	1	..	..
Tobacco	..	..	3	2	..
Citrus fruit	..	..	75	90	..
Grapes	21	..	60	..	..

.. = not available.

(Sources: Banque de Syrie et du Liban, *Exercice 1952* (Paris 1953); except figures for yields, cotton production, and area and production of grapes, all of which have been taken from FAO, *Yearbook of Food and Agricultural Statistics, 1952*.)

312 241 439 There is enough water for land to be used more intensively than in Syria but there is not enough room to grow all that the country needs. Improved methods have increased the yield of cereals per acre, but Lebanon will always have to import wheat. The crop of grapes is nearly double the weight of the wheat harvest and Lebanon exports grapes, wine, and the best quality araq. The citrus exports are high but the growers have not yet established the same name for quality as have the Israelis. Melons, water-melons, apples, onions, and potatoes are also important crops and vegetables are exported as far as the oil towns of Kuwait and Dahran. Cotton and tobacco are also grown in small quantities.

423 369 The land is more evenly parcelled out amongst the people in Lebanon than in Syria but, despite the fact that there are many small holdings, there is a general shift from country to town, and Beirut and its immediate neighbourhood hold nearly half of the population. In the coastal regions of intensive cultivation small holdings predominate, while in the plain regions large estates worked by share-croppers are the most prevalent form of land tenure. Some estates owned by rich men are farmed under modern methods and equipment and there is less room for improvement or for expansion in agriculture than in Syria.

Industry

433 Relative to its size, Lebanon is one of the most industrialized countries in the Middle East area. It is probable that nearly 50,000 persons are so employed, of whom over half are factory workers. However, Lebanese industry has only partly recovered from the loss of the Syrian market and some industries had either to move to Syria or to curtail production. The biggest industries are electricity, which produced 190 million kwh. in 1951, and the Chekka cement factory south of Tripoli, which produced 303,000 tons of cement in 1951. Cotton weaving and

161 square mile; in the province of Hauran, 80 per square mile; and in the province of Hama, 77 per square mile. In contrast, the population density of Al Jazira, incorporating the potentially fertile plains of the Khabour river basin, was 18 per square
369 mile. The country is about 70 per cent rural,
162 with the inhabitants living in some 5,000 villages. There are 6 principal cities with populations of over 30,000 — Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Latakia and Deir ez Zor. Damascus, the capital and a city of commercial and religious significance, had a population of almost 325,100 in 1949. Aleppo, an industrial and trade center, and the largest city in Syria, had a population of about 356,600. It disputes with Damascus the claim of being the oldest city of continued prominence in the world.

162 167 In addition to the older refugee communities, as the Armenians, the Assyrians and the Druzes, which have become established minority groups, Syria received an influx in 1948 of about 150,000 Arabs from northern Palestine. Approximately 80,000 located around Damascus; others in Hauran and the northern provinces. Their status and ultimate distribution were still undetermined in 1952, when the number on the roster of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees totaled 84,000. Over one third resided in special camps, but the remainder were living independently in the various towns and villages.

167 During the Ottoman regime, large numbers of Syrians emigrated to the Americas, and to Europe and Africa. Although they probably total almost 60,000, the Syrian colonies abroad are small in comparison with those of the Lebanese, and their influence on the cultural and the economic life of their homeland is proportionately slight.

811 185 The educational system has undergone revision since the founding of the republic in 1943, with increased emphasis on its adaptation to the culture and the needs of the
811 people. Elementary education is compul-

p. 138(B)

63:Simmons et al G-5 (1941-1951) 1954
M1 Middle East
SYRIA MD1

bul to Baghdad. A railroad also runs from Beirut to Damascus via Rayak. A second line from Damascus to Amman and Ma'an, in Jordan, forms part of the so-called "pilgrim" railway, opened in 1904-06. Air services are available from Damascus and, to a lesser extent, from Aleppo to Beirut and Baghdad, thence to Europe, Africa and the Far East.

Food and Nutrition

The nutritional standards of the people vary markedly in different regions, being highest in the vicinity of Damascus and lowest among the Alawites of Latakia province and the peasants of Hauran and Jebel ed Druz. Undernutrition is common, but generally it is more widespread in the rural villages than in the urban areas. Due to the lack of adequate storage and transportation facilities, local food shortages are frequent, particularly during poor crop years. Up to the present, there has been little organized effort to promote better nutrition among the different population groups. It is expected that such a program will be initiated by the nutrition division created within the governmental health services in 1952.

Cereals constitute the staple foods, and, with certain root vegetables, contribute 70 to 80 per cent of the caloric content of the average diet. Breads prepared from wheat flour are consumed in all parts of the country. Barley is sometimes employed, while maize and sorghum millet are used in the southeast. Rice is universally popular: it is grown in the Al Jazira region, and large amounts are also imported. Broad beans, chick-peas and lentils are basic food items in most areas. Other vegetables, including onions, potatoes, beets, tomatoes, eggplant and the leafy spinach and French lettuce, are abundant in Damascus and Al Jazira provinces, but scarce in Hauran and Jebel ed Druz. Numerous fruits are consumed in season, but the supply is scanty in the Euphrates valley and in the southern provinces. Olives and olive oil are important among most population groups. Milk is

of the babies treated at the maternity and child health center in Damascus suffer from intestinal infections. Epidemics of diarrheal disease often coincide with the ripening of the apricot crop. The ready contamination of this thin-skinned fruit by flies and other insects accounts for the local designation of the early summer diarrheas in the fruit-growing districts as *mish mish* (apricot) disease.

Cholera. Serious outbreaks have accompanied the introduction of cholera in the past, but the disease was absent from Syria from 1928 to 1947, shortly after the epidemic in Egypt. On December 19, 1947, cholera was reported from 2 adjacent villages in the province of Hauran, on the road from Palestine to Damascus. At the same time, cases occurred in 3 villages in the irrigated plain of the Al Ghouta, within 3 or 4 miles of Damascus. Although 45 cases, with 18 deaths, were reported officially, it was generally believed that the actual incidence totaled at least 77 cases.

Quarantine measures were promptly imposed in Hauran and Damascus provinces, and all persons entering or leaving those regions were required to possess certificates of immunization against cholera. Over one and one half million individuals were inoculated with cholera vaccine in the vicinity of Damascus, as well as in the affected districts of Hauran and in the city of Aleppo. Supplies and assistance were furnished the Ministry of Health by the World Health Organization, the Near East Foundation and the Egyptian and Lebanese governments. Vaccine was also provided jointly by the Arabian American Oil Company and Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company. No cases were reported after the initial outbreaks, and on January 17, 1948, Syria was declared free from the disease. The exact origin of the epidemic was never definitely established.

Helminthiases. ANCYLOSTOMIASIS. Hookworm infection, caused by *Ancylostoma duodenale*, is prevalent among the agricultural workers in foci along the banks of the

164 Orontes River and in the irrigated districts
163 of the Euphrates river basin, especially in
369 the Al Jazira region. In a survey of representative population groups in Syria and Lebanon, reported in 1934,[88] hookworm ova were found in fecal specimens from 25 to 36 per cent of the farmers examined in the vicinity of Homs and Hama. Surveys in the Euphrates area suggest comparable infection rates. In the examination of 306 presumably healthy Arabs, from 9 to 60 years of age, who were engaged on excavations near Salihiye on the river about 60 miles south of Deir ez Zor in 1933,[89] slightly over 38 per cent were found to harbor hookworms. The prevalence of infection in the
164 agricultural communities along the Eu-
369 phrates and its tributaries probably aver-
514 ages from 25 to 35 per cent. Promiscuous
515 defecation is widely practiced, and the children, running barefoot around the dwellings and in the fields, are particularly exposed to infection. No data are available regarding the degree of infection, but most observers believe that it is usually moderate. Similar studies undertaken in the areas around Damascus and Aleppo, in an Alawite village on the northern plateau and among Bedouin tribesmen south of the Euphrates yielded no evidence of infection.

164 Schistosomiasis. Schistosomiasis is endemic in two localized areas near the Turkish border—the Tell Abiad district on the upper reaches of the Belikh River and

Distribution of Schistosomiasis in Syria

p. 150(A)

761 369 164 Comparative rates in urban and rural communities were determined in a series of tests on unorganised groups in the city and two adjacent farming districts. In Damascus, positive reactions to tuberculin were given by 47.7 of the boys and 40.8 per cent of the girls tested at 15 years of age. At 20 to 25 years of age, positive reactions were obtained in 86.7 per cent and 77.4 per cent, respectively; at 40 to 45 years of age, in 95.6 and 86.6 per cent, respectively. In the rural communities the positive reaction rates were consistently lower, but approached the urban levels in the older age groups. Among individuals at 15 years of age, 51.6 per cent of the boys and 27.2 per cent of the girls reacted to tuberculin in one area, and 18.1 per cent of the boys and 21.2 per cent of the girls, in another. At 40 to 45 years of age, the proportion of positive reactors averaged 80 per cent in the first series and 50 to 100 per cent in the second.[48]

744 751 747 Within recent years the Ministry of Health has embarked upon a tuberculosis control program. In January, 1950, a tuberculin testing and BCG inoculation campaign was organized under the auspices of the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund and associated organizations, which was taken over by the Ministry in September. Surveys have been carried out in most of the provincial capitals and surrounding rural districts, and the Ministry contemplates the gradual extension of the campaign to cover the populations in all parts of the country. In the course of the investigations completed in 7 provinces between January and September, 1950, almost 417,000 persons were tuberculin tested, and over 188,000 were inoculated with BCG vaccine. The majority were schoolchildren, although miscellaneous population groups of all ages were also included. The proportion of positive reactors in the different provinces ranged from 23 per cent in Jebel ed Druz (As Suwaydah) to 42 per cent in Aleppo.

659 361 751

758 743 The diagnostic and the treatment facili-

sion hospital clinic in Deir ez Zor,[14, 16] the prevalence among the Bedouin has been estimated at 50 to 90 per cent and among the seminomadic Arab townsmen at 20 to 35 per cent. 164 361

The facilities for the diagnosis and the treatment of venereal diseases are meager. As of 1951, the Ministry of Health operated special venereal disease hospitals and outpatient clinics in Damascus and Aleppo. It also maintained 2 mobile dispensaries for the treatment of syphilis and bejel in the eastern provinces. A campaign for the mass treatment of bejel and syphilis was initiated in 1952 by the Ministry, in co-operation with the World Health Organization and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. The findings of the various field units should eventually provide a comprehensive picture of the distribution and the prevalence of these diseases in eastern Syria. 758 743

Diseases of the Eyes. Trachoma is a major public health problem in all parts of the country, although it varies in prominence under urban and rural conditions. The infection rates usually average less than 10 per cent in the cities, but approximate 40 to 60 per cent in the rural areas, where over two thirds of the people live. Repeated surveys among school groups in northern Syria[21] indicate that slightly more than 5 per cent of the children in Aleppo are affected, in contrast with 30 to 40 per cent in the environs of the city and 60 per cent in the rural villages. The disease exists at all levels of society, but is less frequent among the nomadic tribes than among the settled communities in the same general region. Differences in prevalence, influenced by local customs, are also noted among the various racial and religious groups. In a survey covering mountainous and coastal areas of Latakia *muhafasat*, reported in 1933,[20] the highest infection rates were found in the predominantly Alawite districts. The index of infection averaged 44 per cent. It ranged from 25 per cent among the Armenians to 61 per cent among the 164 369 164 563

p. 153(B)

164 reports between louse-borne and flea-borne typhus, but, since small numbers of cases are listed during the summer months, both types of infection are probably included. Murine typhus is endemic throughout this region, and its presence in Greater Syria (including Lebanon) has been confirmed by rickettsial agglutination and guinea pig inoculation tests on blood serums from indigenous cases.[42] Tick-borne typhus is not reported, but cases of fièvre boutonneuse have been observed in the neighboring portions of Lebanon.

Relapsing Fever. Louse-borne relapsing fever is rare, but small outbreaks were reported from Syria and Lebanon in 1945—extensions of the epidemics which spread through the eastern Mediterranean countries in 1942-46.

164 361 Tick-borne relapsing fever is endemic. Occasional cases are seen in the rural villages, usually between May and September. The tick, *Ornithodorus tholozani*, is the vector: specimens collected from a cave near Damascus have been found to be infected with the spirochetes.[43]

Plague. Plague occurs sporadically in the districts along the Turkish and the Iraqi frontiers on the north and on the Israeli border in the south. No severe outbreaks have been recorded within recent years, and no cases since 1946.

164 **Leishmaniasis.** Cutaneous leishmaniasis is widely distributed. The presence of a major focus in Aleppo province accounts for the local classification of the disease as "Aleppo boil." The infection rates in the vicinity of Aleppo formerly approximated 70 per cent, but they have declined appreciably with the extension of insect control measures within recent years. Smaller endemic foci exist in Damascus and other centers. 164 369 The disease is frequently encountered in the rural villages around Damascus, but it has been almost totally absent from the city itself since the inauguration of the municipal fly control campaign in 1946. Cases usually occur between May and

164 369 October, when the vector sandflies, *Phlebotomus papatasii* and *P. sergenti*, are abundant.

164 Kala-azar is seldom specifically reported from Syria, but occasional suspected cases have been described from the Jebel ed Druz region. A canine reservoir undoubtedly exists: the causative organisms have been demonstrated in a stray dog captured at el Bab, near Aleppo.[38]

Other Infections. Outbreaks of dengue fever are sporadic in the western provinces where the vector, *Aedes aegypti*, is indigenous. Sandfly fever, transmitted by *Phlebotomus papatasii*, is endemic and sometimes epidemic.

Nutritional Diseases

186 364 511 Undernutrition and subclinical avitaminosis are prevalent, particularly in the rural villages, where poverty and parasitic infections influence the nutritional standards of the people to a greater extent than in the urban areas. Serious nutritional conditions are most obvious among the children of the Bedouin tribes. Minor vitamin C deficiencies are widespread among the inhabitants of the grain-producing areas in the northeastern and the southern provinces. Occasional borderline cases of pellagra are encountered, but beriberi and ariboflavinosis are unusual. Cases of rickets are numerous, especially in the cities and the towns. Protein edema and overt vitamin A deficiencies are relatively rare.

Miscellaneous Conditions

164 232 Infectious hepatitis is endemic, and epidemics are sometimes reported. Q fever is enzootic among the sheep and the goats, but the extent of human infection is not known. In a series of complement fixation tests recently performed on blood serums taken from sheep and goats in different parts of the country, positive reactions were obtained in 13 to 63 per cent.[40]

190 Silicosis and benign pneumoconiosis are